Remarks

Claims 7-8, 12 and 21-35 are pending in this application. Claims 1-6, 9-11 and 13-20 are canceled herein by amendment without prejudice to the subject matter thereof. Claims 21-35 are added herein by amendment.

35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

While the Office provided a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 112 second paragraph, the Office did not identify any claims rejected thereby. Therefore, there is no rejection to overcome.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) Anticipation

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Luckenbaugh (U.S. Patent No. 5,991,877). This rejection is traversed for reasons stated herein below.

First of all, this Office action clearly rejects claims 1-20 for being anticipated by Luckenbaugh. However, in paragraphs 20-21 of the outstanding Office action pertaining to claims 7-8 and 12, the Office also clearly stated that "Luckenbaugh does not disclose controlling the specific flow of a variety of enterprise related data and application". It is well settled that:

> "A claim is anticipated only if each and every element *as set forth in the claim* is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Constant v. Advanced Micro-Devices, Inc.*, 848 F.2d 1567, 7 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

Given that Luckenbaugh fails to disclose the Office identified missing elements that are positively claimed in the present invention, the claimed invention is thus not anticipated by Luckenbaugh.

Many distinctions exist between Luckenbaugh and the claimed invention. Luckenbaugh discloses an object-oriented trusted application framework. It relates to provisioning of security and access authorization checking in computer systems, among other features.

More specifically, Luckenbaugh provides a an object oriented framework to allow substantial re-use of code by developers of new trusted applications, where an object oriented framework contains a substantial body of security system expertise complementary to the level of security system expertise of application developers. Luckenbaugh also provides a generalized framework which provides separation of security policy from security enforcement and supports fine-grained labeling and access control in a manner compatible with virtual partitioning of storage. Furthermore, it provides an object oriented security

framework that embodies the core concepts of all trusted applications.

The way Luckenbaugh implements its invention is by using a data processing system including an access control system for controlling access to portions of a resource and capable of running an application in which the access control system includes a trusted framework with a credential class and a label class of objects, and a policy manager including a policy manager class of objects for creating label objects for portions of the resource and credential objects corresponding to users of the data processing system, and instantiating the label objects and credential objects in a respective label class or credential class, and an arrangement for comparing a credential object created by the policy manager with a label object created by the policy manager for operation of the access control system.

In contradistinction, the present invention is completely different. The present invention provides a virtual knowledge management system which controls the flow of information relating to the performance of business in an enterprise. The flow of information that is intensively administered by a virtual knowledge base 20 is automatically controlled on the basis of information flow

control data 40 including document utilization authorization data, mail communications control data, workflow model data, and project data, etc. The utilization of document objects by users is controlled in accordance with the document utilization authorization data. The forwarding of and reply to email messages among users is controlled in accordance with the mail communications control data. The order of work among a plurality of users involved in a certain business process is controlled in accordance with the workflow model data. The flow of information among a plurality of users involved in a certain project is controlled in accordance with the project data. The information flow control data 40 is configurable.

The present invention provides a virtual knowledge management system which is used to control the flow of information between a plurality of organizations or persons participating in a business project, thus facilitating the cooperation and association of these organizations or persons. There is a configurable business supporting system which can handle changes in the business of enterprises or differences in the business of different enterprises. More specifically, a virtual knowledge base which stores a plurality of objects that are data entities

for respective utilization by a plurality of users, and that belong to different object types, and control data that is provided corresponding to each of the abovementioned object types, and that relates to the control of object operations performed by the abovementioned users, and a manager which has a plurality of types of functions for respectively performing a plurality of types of object operations including the display and preparation of the abovementioned objects belonging to each object type in accordance with requests from the abovementioned users. The respective functions of the abovementioned manager control the respective operations for the abovementioned objects belonging to the respective object types in accordance with the control data of the corresponding object types.

In one embodiment, the abovementioned manager further has functions for preparing or altering the abovementioned control data corresponding to the respective object types in accordance with requests from the abovementioned users.

These and many other features of the present invention, as claimed, are not disclosed or taught by Luckenbaugh, accordingly, the present invention is patentably distinguished over Luckenbaugh.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) Obviousness

Claims 7-8 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Luckenbaugh. This rejection is traversed for reasons stated herein below.

In rejecting these aspects of the claimed invention, the Office has stated in its entirety that:

> "20. As per Claims 7, 8, and 12, Luckenbaugh fails to expressly disclose controlling the flow of email messages.
> 21. However, Luckenbaugh does disclose controlling the specific flow of a variety of enterprise related data and applications (Fig.3, C6-C7), and Official Notice is taken that email data was a well known form of enterprise related data at the time the invention was made, and it would have been obvious to include email messages as a form of data controlled, in order to most efficiently cover all data flow throughout an enterprise (See KSR [127 S Ct. at 1739] "The combination of familiar elements according to known methods is likely to be obvious when it does no more than yield predictable results.")."

The Applicant agrees with the Office assessment that Lackenbaugh fails to expressly disclose controlling the flow of email messages. In fact, Luckenbaugh also fails to implicitly disclose controlling the flow of email messages. Should the Office disagrees and asserts that Lackenbaugh does implicitly disclose controlling the flow of email messages, a citation in figure number, column number and line number where such implicit disclosure exist in Luckenbaugh is respectfully requested.

37 CFR §1.104(d)(2) has specifically stated in its entirety that:

> "When a rejection in an application is based on facts within the personal knowledge of an employee of the Office, the data shall be as specific as possible, and the reference must be supported, when called for by the applicant, by the affidavit of such employee, and such affidavit shall be subject to contradiction or explanation by the affidavits of the applicant and other persons."

Therefore, it is the requirement of the Code of Federal Regulations that when a rejection in an application is based on facts within the personal knowledge of an employee of the Office, the data shall be as specific as possible, and the reference must be supported, when called for by the applicant, by the affidavit of such employee, and such affidavit shall be subject to contradiction or explanation by the affidavits of the applicant and other persons.

In the instant application, an Office employee has made certain personal knowledge assertions without presenting any support thereof so that one can objectively evaluate the authenticity, authoritativeness, relevancy, thoroughness, integrity, probative value and accuracy of the asserted personal knowledge that is used to reject the claimed invention. Without ascertaining such support, it

is not understood how the substantial evidence test is satisfied in rejecting the claimed invention. Therefore, in full compliance with this section, the Applicant respectfully requests an affidavit from the Office employee making the personal knowledge assertion so that any contradiction or explanation can be prepared by the Applicant or other persons.

The subject matter of independent claim 1 is incorporated into claim 7, and claims 8 is amended to depend on claim 7. The subject matter of independent claim 10 is incorporated into claim 12. Unless the Office employee asserting Office Notice provides as affidavit consistent with Rule 1.104(d)(2), allowance of these claims are hereby requested.

New Claims

New claims 21-35 are added herein by amendment. For the convenience of the Office, specific diagram numbers, page numbers and lines numbers of the written specification that support these claims are shown herein below.

Claim 21 (New) A virtual knowledge management system using a computer (i.e., Figs. 1, 2 and 55,and p. 26,

line 6 to p. 31, line 11, and p..118, line 6 to p. 119, line 4, and p. 121, line 3 to p. 122, line 14), comprising:

a virtual knowledge base which stores a plurality of objects that are data entities for respective utilization by a plurality of users, and that belong to different object types, and control data (i.e., Fig. 55; p. 122, lines 15 to 24; and p. 125, line 10 to p. 127, line 3) that is provided corresponding to each of said object types, and that relates to the control of object operations performed by said users; and

a manager which has a plurality of types of functions (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 127, line 4 to p. 128, line 15) for respectively performing a plurality of types of object operations including the display and preparation of said objects belonging to each object type in accordance with requests from said users;

wherein the respective functions of said manager control the respective operations for said objects belonging to the respective object types in accordance with the control data of the corresponding object types,

wherein said control data corresponding to the respective object types includes:

class definition data (i.e., Figs. 55 and 56; p. 122, line 15 to p. 123, line 10; p. 128, lines 16 to 20; and p.

129, lines 11 to 20) which defines one or more classes which correspond to one or more attribute items possessed by said objects belonging to the respective object types (i.e., p. 123, lines 1 to 10; and p. 129, lines 11 to 20); and

class security setting data which defines the classes that can be accessed or that cannot be accessed by the respective users among said one or more classes (i.e., Figs. 55 and 57; p. 124, lines 11 to 15; p. 128, lines 20 to 21; and p. 131, line 16 to p. 132, line 3);

said objects belonging to the respective object types have values of said one or more classes defined by said class definition data corresponding to the respective object types (i.e., Figs. 55 ad 58; p. 128, line 24 to p. 129, line 2; and p. 134, lines 10 to 19); and

said function used to display said objects inside said manager is arranged so that the values of classes that can be accessed by the respective users are selected from the values of said one or more classes possessed by said objects belonging to the respective object types, and are displayed to the respective users, on the basis of said class security setting data corresponding to the respective object types (i.e., Fig. 59 (specifically, Steps S16, 17 and 21) and Fig. 60; and p. 136, lines 3 to p. 138, lines

11 (specifically, p. 137, lines 5 to 12; and p. 138, lines 4 to 11).

Claim 22 (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 21, wherein said control data corresponding to the respective object types includes:

folder definition data (i.e., Figs. 55, 56 and 57; p. 122, lines 15 to 24; p. 124, lines 5 to 10; p. 125, line 2 to p. 127, line 3; p. 131, lines 7 to 15; and p. 132, line 24 to p. 133, line 8) which defines one or more folders (Fig. 55; and p. 119, line 5 to p. 120, line 6) in which said objects belonging to the respective object types are stored; and

folder security setting data (i.e., Figs. 55, 56 and 57; p. 122, lines 15 to 24; p. 124, lines 5 to 10; p. 125, line 2 to p. 127, line 3; p. 131, lines 7 to 15; and p. 132, line 24 to p. 133, line 8) which defines the folders that can be accessed or that cannot be accessed by the respective users among said one or more folders;

said manager further has a folder operating function (i.e., Fig. 59; p. 127, line 4 to p. 128, line 15; and p. 136, line 3 to p. 137, line 4) for operating said one or more folders defined by said folder definition data

corresponding to the respective object types in accordance with requests from the respective users; and

said folder operating function is arranged so that folders are displayed with a distinction being made between folders that can be accessed and folders that cannot be accessed by the respective users on the basis of said folder security setting data corresponding to the respective object types, and so that only folders that can be accessed by the respective users among said one or more folders that are displayed are opened in accordance with requests from the respective users.

Claim 23. (new) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 21, wherein:

said control data corresponding to the respective object types includes function security setting data (i.e., Figs. 55 and 57; p. 122, lines 15 to 24; p. 124, line 20 to p. 125, line 2; and p. 132, lines 14 to 23) which defines functions that can be accessed or that cannot be accessed by the respective users among said plurality of types of functions inside said manager; and

said manager is arranged so that only the functions that are defined by said function security setting data

corresponding to the respective object types as being accessible by the respective users, among said plurality of types of functions for the respective object types inside said manager, can be operated in accordance with requests from the respective users (i.e., Figs. 55, 57 and 59; and p. 127, lines 4 to 23; and p. 139, line 1 to p. 140, line 8).

Claim 24 (New) A virtual knowledge management system according to claim 21, wherein: said control data corresponding to the respective object types includes:

form definition data which defines one or more forms each of which corresponds to an aggregates of one or more selected classes selected from said classes defined by said class definition data (i.e., Figs. 55 and 56; p.123, line 10 to p.124, line 5; p. 125, line 10 to p. 127, line 2; and p.130, lines 23 to p. 131, line 6); and

form security setting data which defines a form or forms that can be accessed or that cannot be accessed by the respective users among said one or more forms defined by said form definition data (i.e., Figs. 55 and 57; p.124, lines 16 to 20; p. 125, line 10 to p. 127, line 2; and p. 132, lines 4 to 13); and

said function used to display said objects inside said manager is arranged so that the forms that can be accessed by the respective users according to said form security setting data are selected from the one or more forms defined by said form definition data, and are displayed to the respective users (i.e., Figs. 59, 60 and 61; p. 137, lines 5 to 7; p. 137, lines 18 to 21; p. 138, lines 4 to 11; and p. 140, line 9 to p. 141, line 4),

said respective forms displayed to the respective users display the values of the selected classes of said objects, said selected classes being included in the displayed form and can be accessed by the respective users according to said class security setting data (i.e., Figs. 59, 60 and 61; p. 137, lines 5 to 7; p. 137, lines 18 to 21; p. 138, lines 4 to 11; and p. 140, line 9 to p. 141, line 4).

Claim 25. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 21, wherein:

said objects belonging to one of said object types are document objects which can be associated with document files;

the respective document objects have type data (i.e., MD, MS, SS in Fig. 58) which indicates one type selected

from a plurality of specified types (i.e., SS, MS, MD, MR and RG) differing in the numbers or types of associated document files, and also have association data which indicates the association with one or more document files in cases where the document objects are associated with said one or more document files (i.e., Figs. 4 and 58, and p. 37, line 1 to p. 40, line 12; and p. 133, lines 14 to 21);

the function for displaying said document objects inside said manager displays the types of the respective document objects on the basis of said type data of the respective document objects, and displays the document files associated with the respective document objects on the basis of said association data of the respective document objects, and opens said associated document files in accordance with requests from said users (i.e., Fig. 59 (S19 - S21) and Fig. 50; p. 137, lines 5 to 7; p. 137, line 21 to p. 138, line 11).

Claim 26. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 25, wherein: said plurality of specified types include

a single sheet object (i.e., Fig. 4, #71) that is associated with a document file having a single sheet,

a multi sheet object (i.e., Fig. 4, #72) that is associated with a document file having a plurality of sheets,

a multi document object (i.e., Fig. 4, #73) that is associated with a plurality of document files of which information is different,

a multi representation object (i.e., Fig. 4, #74) that is associated with a plurality of document files if which formats are different

an annotation object (i.e., Fig. 4, #75) that is associated with a document file or a set of document files which expresses an annotation or annotations accompanying another document object, and

a registered object (i.e., Fig. 4, #76) that is not yet associated with an actual document file (p. 37, line 1 to p. 40, line 12; and Fig.4).

Claim 27. (New) A virtual knowledge management system according to claim 26, wherein:

when a user who is allowed to perform a function of opening files (i.e., Fig. 62, #S42), selects a document file to be opened from said document files associated with a displayed document object which is of type of said multi representation object, the function for displaying said

document objects inside said manager opens all of the document files associated with said displayed document object (i.e., p.141, lines 11 to 24 and Fig. 62).

Claim 28. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 21, wherein:

said objects belonging to one of said object types are business processes (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 118, lines 19 to 23; PRC_ca, PRC_cb, PRC_cc) which respectively have one or more sets of workflow model data that respectively define the flow of work among a plurality of users;

said objects belonging to another one of said object types are tasks which have task data that defines the work that can be performed by said users (i.e., TSK_da, TSK_db, TSK_dc),

said objects belonging to another one of said object types are projects (i.e., PRJ_ea, PRJ_eb, PRJ_ec), these respective projects are associated with one or more of said business processes, and with one or more of said tasks respectively assigned to one or more of said users as defined by the workflow data of the respective business processes;

said manager further has a project control function (i.e., Figs. 55 and 6; p. 122, lines 8 to 11; p. 49, line 9

to p. 56, line 4) for controlling the progress of the respective projects in accordance with requests from said users; and

said project control function is arranged so that this function prepares and displays a task list that lists the tasks assigned to each of the users on the basis of said one or more business processes and said one or more tasks associated with the respective projects, and so that this function updates said task list for the respective users in accordance with input indicating the initiation or completion of tasks from the respective users.

said knowledge data base further stores a project administration table (i.e., PRJ_ADT in Fig. 68) which includes a plurality of users who execute one or more projects, a plurality of tasks which must be executed by the plurality of users, an execution sequence for execution of the tasks by said plurality of users, and status of said plurality of tasks (i.e., Figs. 68 and 69; p.157, line 3 to p. 160, line 6);

said project control function comprises,

means for displaying said task list of tasks which each of said users can execute upon a user terminal of said user, based upon said project administration table (i.e.,

Figs. 71, 41 and 45; p. 163, line 19 to p. 164, line 11; p. 100, line 6 to p. 103, line 23);

means for receiving input from each said user which indicates that said task has ended, and setting the status of said task in said project administration table to ended (i.e., Figs. 71, 41 and 45; p. 163, line 19 to p. 164, line 11; p. 100, line 6 to p. 103, line 23);

means for checking, based upon said project administration table, whether or not all of tasks for each of said users have ended (i.e., Figs. 71, 41 and 45; p. 163, line 19 to p. 164, line 11; p. 100, line 6 to p. 103, line 23); and

means for, if some user exists for whom all of the tasks have ended, based upon said project administration table, specifying a user for execution next in sequence, and updating said task list which is displayed upon said user terminal of said specified user to a task list which includes a task which said user can newly start (i.e., Figs. 71, 41 and 45; p. 163, line 19 to p. 164, line 11; p. 100, line 6 to p. 103, line 23).

Claim 29. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 28, wherein:

said project administration table further stores a reference value or values to one or more deliverable document objects which are deliverables of a certain task,

said project control function further comprises,

means for storing said one or more deliverable document objects in said knowledge data base; and

means for storing said reference value or values to said one or more deliverable document object associated with said certain task in said project administration table (i.e., Figs. 68, 69, and 71; p.158, line 24 to p.159, line 2; and p.162, lines 1 to 11).

Claim 30. (New) A virtual knowledge management system using a computer (i.e., Figs. 1, 2 and 55,and p. 26, line 6 to p. 31, line 11, and p..118, line 6 to p. 119, line 4, and p. 121, line 3 to p. 122, line 14), comprising:

a virtual knowledge base which stores a plurality of objects that are data entities for respective utilization by a plurality of users, and that belong to different object types, and control data (i.e., Fig. 55; p. 122, lines 15 to 24; and p. 125, line 10 to p. 127, line 3) that is provided corresponding to each of said object types, and that relates to the control of object operations performed by said users; and

a manager which has a plurality of types of functions for respectively performing a plurality of types of object operations including the display and preparation of said objects belonging to each object type in accordance with requests from said users (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 127, line 4 to p. 128, line 15);

wherein

the respective functions of said manager control the respective operations for said objects belonging to the respective object types in accordance with the control data of the corresponding object types,

wherein:

said objects belonging to one of said object types are document objects which can be associated with document files;

the respective document objects have type data which indicates one type selected from a plurality of specified types differing in the numbers or types of associated document files, and also have association data which indicates the association with one or more document files in cases where the document objects are associated with said one or more document files;

the function for displaying said document objects inside said manager displays the types of the respective

document objects on the basis of said type data of the respective document objects, and displays the document files associated with the respective document objects on the basis of said association data of the respective document objects, and opens said associated document files in accordance with requests from said users (i.e., p. 37, line 1 to p. 40, line 12; and Fig.4).

Claim 31. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 25, wherein: said plurality of specified types (i.e., p. 37, line 1 to p. 40, line 12; and Fig.4) include

a single sheet object (i.e., Fig. 4, #71) that is associated with a document file having a single sheet,

a multi sheet object (i.e., Fig. 4, #72) that is associated with a document file having a plurality of sheets,

a multi document object (i.e., Fig. 4, #73) that is associated with a plurality of document files of which information is different,

a multi representation object (i.e., Fig. 4, #74) that is associated with a plurality of document files if which formats are different,

an annotation object (i.e., Fig. 4, #75) that is associated with a document file or a set of document files which expresses an annotation or annotations accompanying another document object, and

a registered object (i.e., Fig. 4, #76) that is not yet associated with an actual document file.

Claim 32. (New) A virtual knowledge management system according to claim 31, wherein:

when a user who is allowed to perform a function of opening files (i.e., Fig. 62, #S42, P. 141, lines 11 to 24), selects a document file to be opened from said document files associated with a displayed document object which is of type of said multi representation (MR) object, the function (i.e., S17 - S21 in Fig. 59) for displaying said document objects inside said manager (i.e., 4 (particularly 11)) opens all of the document files associated with said displayed document object.

Claim 33. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 30, wherein:

said objects belonging to one of said object types are business processes (i.e., PRC_ca, PRC_cb, PRC_cc, ...) which respectively have one or more sets of workflow model

data that respectively define the flow of work among a plurality of users (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 118, lines 19 to 23);

said objects belonging to another one of said object types are tasks which have task data that defines the work that can be performed by said users

said objects belonging to another one of said object types are projects, these respective projects are associated with one or more of said business processes, and with one or more of said tasks (i.e., TSK_da, TSK_db, TSK_dc, ...) respectively assigned to one or more of said users as defined by the workflow data of the respective business processes;

said manager further has a project control function for controlling the progress of the respective projects in accordance with requests from said users (i.e., Figs. 55 and 6; p. 122, lines 8 to 11; p. 49, line 9 to p. 56, line 4); and

said project control function is arranged so that this function prepares and displays a task list that lists the tasks assigned to each of the users on the basis of said one or more business processes and said one or more tasks associated with the respective projects, and so that this function updates said task list for the respective users in

accordance with input indicating the initiation or completion of tasks from the respective users,

said knowledge data base further stores a project administration table which includes a plurality of users who execute one or more projects (i.e., PRJ_ea, PRJ_eb, PRJ_ec, ...), a plurality of tasks which must be executed by the plurality of users, an execution sequence for execution of the tasks by said plurality of users, and status of said plurality of tasks (i.e., Figs. 68 and 69; p.157, line 3 to p. 160, line 6);

said project control function comprises (i.e., Figs. 71, 41 and 45; p. 163, line 19 to p. 164, line 11; p. 100, line 6 to p. 103, line 23):

means for displaying said task list of tasks which each of said users can execute upon a user terminal of said user, based upon said project administration table;

means for receiving input from each said user which indicates that said task has ended, and setting the status of said task in said project administration table to ended;

means for checking, based upon said project administration table, whether or not all of tasks for each of said users have ended; and

means for, if some user exists for whom all of the tasks have ended, based upon said project administration table, specifying a user for execution next in sequence, and updating said task list which is displayed upon said user terminal of said specified user to a task list which includes a task which said user can newly start.

Claim 34. (New) A virtual knowledge management system using a computer (i.e., Figs. 1, 2 and 55,and p. 26, line 6 to p. 31, line 11, and p..118, line 6 to p. 119, line 4, and p. 121, line 3 to p. 122, line 14), comprising:

a virtual knowledge base which stores a plurality of objects that are data entities for respective utilization by a plurality of users, and that belong to different object types, and control data (i.e., Fig. 55; p. 122, lines 15 to 24; and p. 125, line 10 to p. 127, line 3) that is provided corresponding to each of said object types, and that relates to the control of object operations performed by said users; and

a manager which has a plurality of types of functions for respectively performing a plurality of types of object operations including the display and preparation of said objects belonging to each object type in accordance with

requests from said users (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 127, line 4 to p. 128, line 15);

wherein the respective functions of said manager control the respective operations for said objects belonging to the respective object types in accordance with the control data of the corresponding object types,

wherein:

said objects belonging to one of said object types are business processes (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 118, lines 19 to 23) which respectively have one or more sets of workflow model data that respectively define the flow of work among a plurality of users;

said objects belonging to another one of said object types are tasks (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 118, lines 19 to 23, TSK_da, TSK_db, TSK_dc, ...) which have task data that defines the work that can be performed by said users

said objects belonging to another one of said object types are projects (i.e., Fig. 55; and p. 118, lines 19 to 23, PRJ_ea, PRJ_eb, PRJ_ec, ...), these respective projects are associated with one or more of said business processes, and with one or more of said tasks respectively assigned to one or more of said users as defined by the workflow data of the respective business processes;

said manager further has a project control function for controlling the progress of the respective projects in accordance with requests from said users; and

said project control function is arranged so that this function prepares and displays a task list that lists the tasks assigned to each of the users on the basis of said one or more business processes and said one or more tasks associated with the respective projects, and so that this function updates said task list for the respective users in accordance with input indicating the initiation or completion of tasks from the respective users (i.e., Figs. 55 and 6; p. 122, lines 8 to 11; p. 49, line 9 to p. 56, line 4),

said knowledge data base further stores a project administration table (i.e., Figs. 68 and 69; p.157, line 3 to p. 160, line 6) which includes a plurality of users who execute one or more projects, a plurality of tasks which must be executed by the plurality of users, an execution sequence for execution of the tasks by said plurality of users, and status of said plurality of tasks;

said project control function comprises (i.e., Figs. 71, 41 and 45; p. 163, line 19 to p. 164, line 11; p. 100, line 6 to p. 103, line 23),

means for displaying said task list of tasks which each of said users can execute upon a user terminal of said user, based upon said project administration table;

means for receiving input from each said user which indicates that said task has ended, and setting the status of said task in said project administration table to ended;

means for checking, based upon said project administration table, whether or not all of tasks for each of said users have ended; and

means for, if some user exists for whom all of the tasks have ended, based upon said project administration table, specifying a user for execution next in sequence, and updating said task list which is displayed upon said user terminal of said specified user to a task list which includes a task which said user can newly start.

Claim 35. (New) The virtual knowledge management system according to claim 34, wherein:

said project administration table further stores a reference value or values to one or more deliverable document objects which are deliverables of a certain task,

said project control function further comprises,

means for storing said one or more deliverable document objects in said knowledge data base; and

means for storing said reference value or values to said one or more deliverable document object associated with said certain task in said project administration table (i.e., Figs. 68, 69, and 71; p.158, line 24 to p.159, line 2; and p.162, lines 1 to 11).

As features of these claims are neither disclosed nor taught in the asserted prior art of record, allowance of these claims are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

This application is believed to be in condition for allowance. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the Undersigned Attorney if a Notice of Allowance is not issued in the next Office action.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment of fees or credit any overpayment of fees in connection with this communication to Deposit Account 502840.

Respectfully submitted,
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